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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how Eastern Illinois University (EIU) has approached the problem of training faculty to use and support its computer network by creating a new faculty committee called the Computer Resource Faculty (CRF). The Educational Computing Network (ECN) at EIU currently provides e-mail, bulletin boards, BITNET connections, simulation packages, statistical software, and manufacturing software for students and faculty. The purpose of the CRF is to expand computer use in all aspects of education and provide support to users of the network. The CRF consists of at least one faculty member from each of the major academic units at the university. In the past some faculty members have felt the Academic Computing staff were too technically oriented to comfortably handle the faculty's academic problems. The role of CRF is to act as a liaison between the Academic Computing staff and the general faculty. The CRF has no specific duties or guidelines, which allows the committee to have maximum flexibility to meet each unit's needs. Key implementation concepts of the CRF include flexibility to meet individual needs; faculty training by peers; group meetings with Academic Computing; and training the trainer. Future needs of CRF are financial resources for developing materials, purchasing software, and inviting speakers; recognition of activities of committee members as part of their workload; release time to organize and train; and user role models from departmental leaders. (ALF)

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Educating the faculty and staff to computer use: A working model

by

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Introduction

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Eastern Illinois University's progression from teaching programming through computer science to the use of computers for instructors and instruction is probably very similar to many institutions' experience. The latest enhancement has been the installation of a campus wide network. One of the essential aspects of the installation is the training and support of the general faculty.

This presentation will describe how EIU has approached the problem of training and support by creating a new faculty committee called the Computer Resource Faculty (CRF). The CRF was developed in response to expanded computer use in all aspects of the educational experience. The computing environment is described to provide a reference of similarity to other institutions. The responsibilities and structure of the CRF are outlined, as well as including examples of their activities.

Progression of computing as EIU

Eastern Illinois is a comprehensive state university with 11,300 students. It grants degrees in 83 Bachelor degree programs and has 21 Masters degree programs. Physically, the campus is compact for a school its size with only 9 major academic buildings.

Eastern began its educational experience with computing by teaching programming on its local mainframe, using COBOL, FORTRAN and BASIC. In 1974 EIU expanded its use by participating in the Mid-Illinois Computer Cooperative (MICC), which was the sharing of distributed computing services with 8 other universities. The MICC services expanded the resources for teaching programming using two labs having a total of 30 terminals plus dial-up access.

MICC existed until 1987 when EIU's governing board (Board of Governors) took over the services in the form of the Educational Computing Network (ECN) for its five universities. ECN provided new services for students and faculty by adding e-mail, bulletin boards,

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Bitnet connections, simulation packages, statistical software and manufacturing software. Later an IBM mainframe was added for additional programming and SAS.

The Educational Computing Network provided faculty with the first services for electronic communication, shared printing, file serving and bulletin board interest groups. This laid the foundation for the campus network, by developing some experienced faculty using these services, and by illustrating a need for expanded access.

Current Computing Environment

- 1600 desktop computers
- 11 computer labs
- 1 unix server for math
- 2 mainframes
- Campus network (Uniform Campus-wide Area Network, UCAN)
 - Over 2000 connection boxes
 - 600 currently connected (300 faculty)
 - 1 unix server for faculty
 - 8 dos servers
 - 4 shared printers

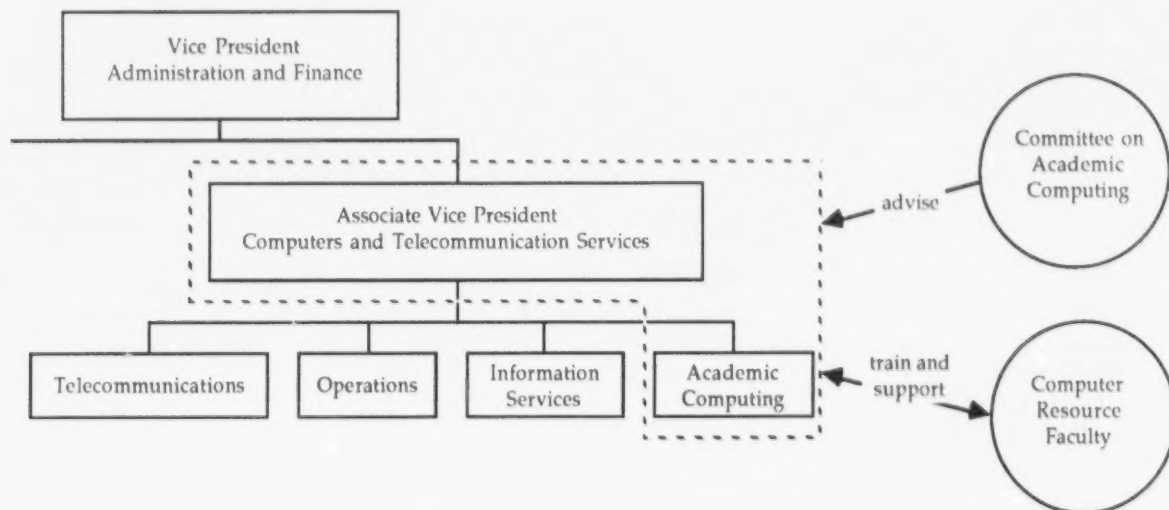
Network Services

- E-mail
- Bulletin board service with Clarinet news
- Internet services
- File sharing
- Shared printing
- DOS server programs
 - WordPerfect
 - Quattro Pro
 - PageMaker
- CD ROM searches (9 Data bases)
- Library catalog searches
- Journal abstract searches
- Student record access
- Run programs sorting student records
- Online advising
- NovaNet (Plato)

The network was first available at the beginning of 1990, and it is easy to see from the above list that to the novice and non computer user the networks potential could look bewildering. Before the installation of the campus network, the ECN was the only network available and the ECN staff, along with EIU's Academic Computing staff, provided the documentation and local training and support. When the UCAN was developed, it became clear that existing staff were too few to handle the potential 600 faculty needing training and support.

One Institution's Approach:

In 1990, Eastern Illinois University established a standing committee known as the Computer Resource Faculty (CRF). This group was jointly appointed by the Provost and the Associate Vice President for Computer and Telecommunications Services. For several years there has been the Committee on Academic Computing, a group of Deans and Chairs who advise on the hardware development and services provided for all academic computing concerns. As the network was installed it was understood that the system's success depended on a well supported group of users. The CRF was conceived and proposed to have at least one faculty member appointed from each of the major academic units of the University to make a committee of 11 members. The relationship of these committees to the computing area are illustrated below.



The CRF act as liaisons between Academic Computing and the general faculty, fulfilling their charge independent of each other and without prescribed duties. Some of the faculty seemed to feel that the staff of Academic Computing, being computer professionals, were too technically oriented to be able to comfortably interface with the faculty's academic problems. To service all teaching and non teaching faculty at least one CRF member would be selected from within each college. Representation across the campus is divided as follows:

College/Unit	members	College/Unit	members
Liberal Arts & Sciences	3	Applied Sciences	1
Education	1	Testing Services	1
Fine Arts	1	Library	1
HPER	1	Continuing Education	1
Business	1		

The CRF member should be accessible so faculty can come with computer-related questions and problems. This college-based CRF member would either answer the faculty member's questions directly or would refer them to a specific staff person in one of the Academic Computing offices. This would reduce the number of requests for information coming directly from the University's faculty to Academic Computing. It would also provide a more local, approachable, "one-of-us" type persons in each college who could serve as a point of first approach for college faculty. Also, as time permitted, the CRF member could provide computer-related training sessions or workshops for members of their college.

At present, the CRF members are a service group, performing their duties without a budget or credit-unit recognition as part of their annual workload. They do, however, receive up to \$500.00 in annual travel grants from their college deans.

The CRF model is still very loosely organized. Its charter is only to act as a liaison with no specific set of duties or guidelines describing how that is to be accomplished. Intentionally or not, the vagueness does allow extreme flexibility in servicing each College's needs. Each CRF creates their own objectives and provide the services requested for computing demands. Listed below are examples of the activities performed by several of the CRFs;

- workshops specifically for the use of electronic mail as a means of speedy interaction with colleagues on campus, as well as around the world
- workshops specifically for the use of electronic bulletin boards as a way of discussing current concerns and receiving information useful to the faculty's teaching and/or research interests
- contacts on an individual basis with faculty members to alert them to computer-based resources related to their particular disciplinary interests
- tutoring of individual faculty members (including Deans) to improve their facility with computers and to deal with their problems and questions in "hands-on" computer sessions
- liaison work with the University administration and with Academic Computing (usually handled through the medium of CRF meetings) to assure a smooth two-way flow of information regarding computer related matters, including the provision of resources to the various colleges
- demonstration sessions to illustrate the information access resources from the Library: CD-ROM, card catalog, abstract searches, and software downloading
- addressing student groups interested in the network services for group communication and educational resources

- developing instructional materials to make the unfamiliar unix operating system, e-mail and bulletin board services easy to learn and appear friendly
- instructing on the use of the dos faculty servers, shared printing and the related software
- instructing persons on how to access student records, enrollment figures, setting registration flags and other advising functions
- solving general computing problems like installing dos 5.0, helping with computer graphics, making recommendation on pc purchases.

Summary

Key Implementation Concepts

1. Minimal specific duties facilitating flexibility of activities to match each College's faculty needs.
2. Faculty trained by peers who understand their needs and can empathize with beginning users.
3. Frequent group meetings with Academic Computing.
4. Train the trainer.

CRF Needs

1. Financial resources (to the committee as a whole and individual CRFs) for developing training materials, purchasing educational software, inviting speakers, etc.
2. Recognition of activities as part of workload.
3. Release time to organize and conduct training.
4. Department leaders' support as user role models.